

Salig Bangsamoro

(Trust Bangsamoro) is Rooted in Trust Philippines' biweekly rumor bulletin. Rooted in Trust is a global and local humanitarian response run by Internets to fight the spread of rumors on COVID-19. In the Philippines, the focus is on the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

This week's bulletin answers two rumors we have heard through our social media monitoring platforms. First, a claim said that COVID-19 vaccine has microchip and that a US business magnate is the one developing them. Second, a rumor jokingly said that closing the testing centers is the way to solve the pandemic. This 4th issue of Salig Bangsamoro bulletin provides answers to counter these rumors and to see what people can do next.

What are people saying

Vaccines with microchip; Bill Gates is behind all this

(Click underlined words to check linked articles)

"The vaccine with microchip will soon be released in US. That is why you should not get vaccinated when it becomes available in the Philippines because they'll use a different kind of needle, the kind with a microchip... Tell your loved ones. This is not joke... Bill Gates created the virus and he brought it in China and when it is spread around the world, he will also release the vaccine against the virus... The doctors themselves are saying that vaccine is not good to our body because of chemicals and biochip." (Male, 46-50 years old)

Rumor risk level:
Medium

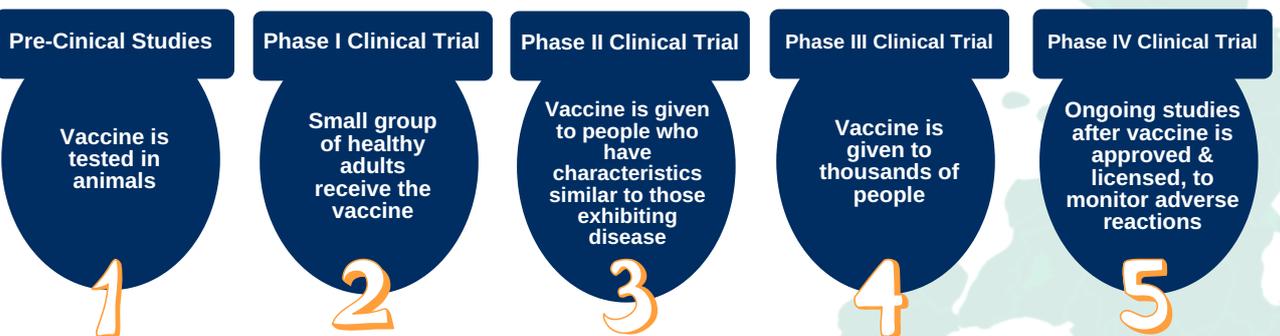
Platform: Facebook
Reactions: 38
Comments: 3
Shares: 69

This claim against COVID-19 vaccines could likely discourage people not to get vaccinated. Early this year, the same rumor spread not just in the Philippines but also around the globe. The post is possibly shared by a Filipino who was based in the US, and coming from a concerned kababayan, this has widely circulated as chain message in social media. The rumor starts to spark anew in BARMM given the recent news on COVID-19 vaccines.

This kind of rumor may dampen the hope to end this pandemic and may trigger fear for people not to trust the vaccines and not to seek medical treatment. History shows vaccine can end the spread of virus and can save millions of lives every year. Smallpox used to be a leading cause of death but thanks to success of vaccination, smallpox was wiped out. Vaccines have been proven effective in preventing life-threatening diseases like polio, measles, mumps, diphtheria, tetanus, rabies.

The vaccine would teach our bodies to fight infection by stopping us from catching the virus. Refusing vaccination means risking our lives and the lives of our loved ones. The allegations of injecting microchips by US Billionaire and Microsoft founder, Bill Gates are not true. While Mr. Gates denied this, there are also no evidence to support this claim. Vaccines contain complex mixture of ingredients that instruct our body to build immunity against foreign organism, and microchips are not one of them.

Vaccines undergo long trials and challenges (see figure below) to make sure it's effective and safe. The WHO reported 42 COVID-19 vaccine candidates, 10 of which are in the stage where thousands of people will be vaccinated (phase 3). Our country is actively involved in ensuring that COVID-19 vaccines are available by April-June next year.



We must learn from our mistakes. With the recent polio outbreak in the Philippines, we have denied children lives that they deserve, the damages caused by the disease might have been prevented, if only we trusted our vaccines. But while we are waiting for the COVID-19 vaccines, we must still follow the minimum public health safety standards set by the Department of Health to protect our loved ones and control the spread of the virus.

WHY DOES IT MATTER & ANSWERS

What are people saying

Closing testing centers is the solution to COVID-19

“Good news to stop COVID-19! There’s already a solution and it is guaranteed that no one will be positive... Philippine Red Cross has started it so others may continue. Just close all the testing center.” (Marawi City, Male, 46-60 years old)

Rumor risk level: Medium
Platform: Facebook
Reactions: 621
Comments: 49
Shares: 12

WHY DOES IT MATTER + ANSWERS

This rumor was initially shared as a joke, however the message that does come across can be interpreted as a negative view on the presence of testing and testing centers, linking them to the rise of COVID-19 cases in the country.

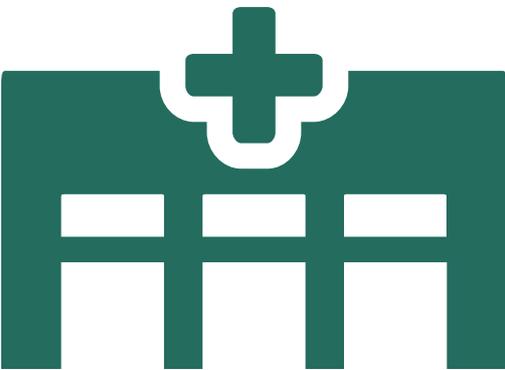
This is related to the issue of Philippine Red Cross, an organization that has helped conduct COVID-19 screening in the country, when it decided to stop its COVID-19 tests funded by the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) on October 14.

The insurance agency failed to pay its increasing debt to the organization, and this had caused thousands of overseas workers and other returning from abroad stranded in quarantine facilities as they need to wait for negative results before they could be allowed to go home.

PhilHealth had a debt of around P1.1 billion to Red Cross and the government recognized that this is a big amount to continue the testing. The organization is also responsible for 25% of all the country’s testing. On October 28, Red Cross resumed its COVID-19 testing services after PhilHealth paid more than half of its debt or a total P600 million.

The urgent call to resume the COVID-19 testing of Red Cross showed the important role the testing centers play during this pandemic. To simply say that closing these centers is the answer to stop the pandemic, is not helpful to control the spread of the virus, detect and isolate COVID-19 positive patients and to ease up the contact tracing process.

Testing is more than just a requirement, but it is your way to protect not just yourself but also of your family and weak member of the community.



BY VACCINATING YOURSELF, YOU ARE ALSO PROTECTING THOSE AROUND YOU. DO NOT RISK THEIR LIVES. CLOSING TESTING CENTERS WILL NOT SOLVE THE PANDEMIC.

If you or your loved one is experiencing any flu-like symptoms and needs COVID-19 testing, you may contact:



Cotabato Sanitarium
064 429-0082



**BANGSAMORO EMERGENCY
HOTLINE NUMBERS**

Globe: 09663018777
Smart: 09363395221



**AMAI PAKPAK MEDICAL CENTER-
COVID HOTLINES**

Smart: 09991909488
Globe: 09955632722